



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Howard County Council Passes Legislation to Establish a Fee on Plastic Bags

Ellicott City, MD (December 4, 2019) – On December 2, 2019, the Howard County Council voted to pass Council Bill 64-2019, which establishes a fee on disposable plastic bags that are provided to consumers in Howard County. This authority was enabled by the Maryland General Assembly earlier this year through HB1166, legislation introduced by Delegate Terri Hill.

Sponsored by Councilman Opel Jones and Councilwoman Christiana Rigby, CB64-2019 will require a five-cent fee for disposable plastic shopping bags that are up to 2.25 millimeters thick. Plastic bag fees have been implemented in numerous jurisdictions across the United States and around the world, successfully resulting in reductions of plastic bag use. Consumers are encouraged to avoid paying this fee on plastic bags by bringing reusable bags with them to the store, reducing the impact of single-use plastic bags.

The retailer will retain one cent out of this five-cent fee to cover administrative costs, while the remaining four cents will go to the county. Revenue from the fee will be used to establish the Disposable Plastics Reduction Fund, which will enable the Howard County Office of Community Sustainability to provide reusable bags to the community, develop environmental education programs, and promote activities to inform the public about single-use plastics reduction.

"I am very happy that the County Council came together to vote to pass Council Bill 64-2019. Having a fee on single-use plastic bags will not only decrease the usage of disposable plastic bags, but will also raise revenue for clean-ups and environmental education," said Jones. "I am also pleased that the amendment to ban plastic bags was defeated, as research shows that a fee is preferential and more effective for behavior change compared to a straight ban on single-use plastic bags."

"The rampant overuse of disposable plastics is a significant danger to our environment, our wildlife, and a sustainable future in Howard County. With this fee on plastic bag use, Howard County joins dozens of jurisdictions that have already taken this step toward a cleaner and more environmentally-conscious world," said Rigby. "I am incredibly grateful to the dozens of citizens that testified in support of this measure and the hundreds of Howard County constituents who contacted the Council to pass this legislation."

After voting on several amendments to the legislation, the County Council passed this bill in a 4-1 vote. To read the legislation and amendments, visit <https://cc.howardcountymd.gov/Legislation>.

This legislation will go into effect on October 1, 2020.

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